



**For immediate release
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**PATRICK ADMINISTRATION PROCLAIMS
APRIL 15 - 21 AS FOREST FIRE AWARENESS WEEK**

BOSTON – April is historically the month when the greatest number of forest fires occur in New England and the loss of acreage to forest fire is highest. Governor Deval Patrick is joining other New England states in proclaiming April 15-21 as “Forest Fire Awareness Week.”

Priscilla Geigis, Acting Commissioner of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), is encouraging all citizens to use caution when visiting the state forests and parks, and to be conscious of wind and drought conditions when burning forestry debris.

“As the legal season for permitted open burning nears its end in many of our communities,” said Geigis, “the risk of these fires going out of control increases as do the weather factors that greatly affect forest fires.”

Added James DiMaio, Acting Chief of DCR’s Bureau of Forest Fire Control and Forestry, “DCR’s Bureau of Forest Fire Control and Forestry has joined its fellow Northeastern Forest Fire Protection Commission (NFFPC) members in promoting an increased awareness of the dangers from forest fire. More awareness by all residents and visitors will further help them protect their homes, personal property, and way of life.”

The NFFPC is made up of the six New England states, as well as New York, the Canadian provinces of Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, and the New England National Forests.

“Individuals and families should be especially aware of forest fire danger when enjoying the outdoors in general during this spring vacation break,” said Geigis, “and to make an effort to be extra careful with ashes and matches.”

DCR also recommends checking the spark arresters on combustible engines such as lawn mowers, all-terrain vehicles, dirt bikes, and chain saws as a fire-prevention measure.

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